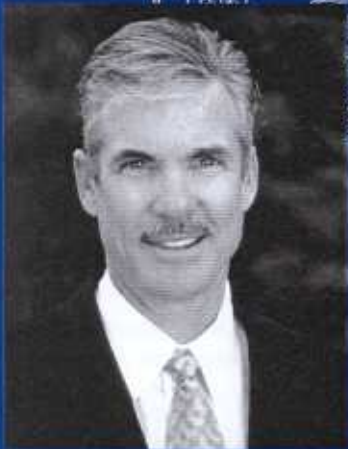


Senator Tom Torlakson Sacramento Business Bulletin



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New Law Establishes Micro-Business Tier

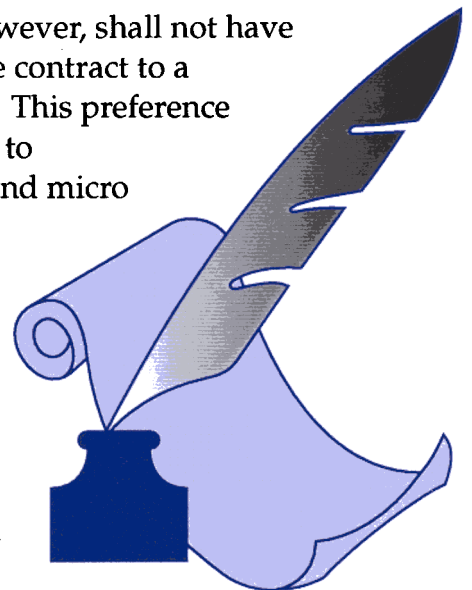
In September 1999, the governor appointed a task force on Diversity and Outreach, which was comprised of business, education, civic and political leaders and members of the California State Legislature. The task force's report was issued in August 2000. One of its recommendations was to create two small business tiers, specifically a new "micro business" tier.

In an effort to create this new tier, Assembly Bill 1084 was introduced and signed into law. This measure defines a new type of small business, the micro business, that, once certified by the Department of General Services, will be afforded all the rights and benefits that certified small businesses are eligible for under the Small Business Procurement and Contract Act, including the streamlined contracting procedures. These new micro businesses will be certified by the state as making less than \$2.5 million per year or as manufacturers with 25 or fewer employees.

In addition, AB 1084 proposes the current five percent small business preference be fully extended to encompass all competitive bids issued by state agencies, including those that use points and cost in a formula to determine the bidder with the highest points (in the past, while the preference has been applied to these solicitations, it has been diluted because it was applied only to the cost portion of the bid).

This new law also suggests a non-small business preference, up to a maximum of five percent, be awarded to bidders proposing to subcontract to certified small or micro businesses. The application of this preference, however, shall not have the effect of denying award of the contract to a certified small or micro business. This preference will encourage prime contractors to subcontract with certified small and micro businesses; however, such subcontracting will not be to the detriment of certified small or micro businesses bidding as prime contractors.

If you would like more information on this new law or any other state matter, please feel free to contact my District Office.



New Internet Site for Small Business

Small business owners now have access to legal and regulatory business information at their fingertips through BusinessLaw.gov, a new web site designed to help reduce the burden of complying with laws and regulations.

Sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration, this resource guide was developed with small business owners in mind.

Understanding federal, state and local laws and regulations that affect day-to-day operations is critical to the success of a small business. The web site provides interagency and intergovernmental information arranged by subject. BusinessLaw.gov will simplify the way government interacts with small businesses.

BusinessLaw.gov is a premier Internet tool for small businesses. In addition to serving as the foundation for a central business compliance resource for entrepreneurs, the site can be used by business managers, counselors, teachers and legal professionals as an educational guide.

The web site consolidates and indexes, links in one central location, to credible sources of information on 39 areas of general interest ranging from the most basic topics, such as licenses and permits, to highly specialized topics, such as e-commerce and exporting. The site also offers information specific to each state and territory including sections on "Hiring Employees," "Paying Taxes" and "Selecting a Location."

To serve a variety of user preferences, it features interactive tools, frequently asked questions and answers, forms and publications, electronic regulatory compliance guides and portal capability to lead small business customers to the answers they need at every stage of the business cycle. BusinessLaw.gov takes web technology to the next level by helping users identify and solve their problems.



California Business Energy Helpline Available for Conservation Questions

Thanks to the conservation efforts of consumers and business owners in California, the state is meeting the energy challenge. Many Californians have cut their electricity usage by 12-14 percent. Californians can further increase conservation efforts by reducing their demand for electricity and use energy more efficiently.

The California State Legislature is working with utility companies, generators and consumer groups to fashion long-term solutions for reliable and affordable electricity. The state already has implemented a program to reduce consumption by a minimum of eight percent across the board, and California small businesses have an important role to play in this plan.

Businesses can address the need for energy efficiency in various ways. Fortunately, many of them also can help improve a business' bottom line. But the need for action is immediate, so here are some important tips that can be taken right away:

- Minimize energy usage during the peak demand hours of 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

- Turn off unneeded lights and equipment, especially in unused offices and conference rooms. Turn down other lighting when possible
- Turn computers, copiers and other office equipment to low-power standby mode. Turn equipment off at the end of the workday.
- Buy ENERGY STAR equipment and lights.

If you have business energy conservation questions, the California Technology, Trade and Commerce Agency (CTTCA) is sponsoring a Business Energy Helpline. You can call (916) 445-9699 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

To further assist energy efficiency efforts, CTTCA is launching an educational outreach campaign. It will address not only the current energy situation and quick ways to reduce consumption, but also long-term suggestions on avoiding future power supply problems.

CTTCA also will host statewide workshops featuring energy efficiency experts. More details are available on its web site at www.commerce.ca.gov.